(b) whether it is also a fact that the C.C.E.A., has also decided to allow private sector to set up coal washeries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI P. A. SANGMA): (a) and (b) The Government have decided to allow private sector participation in coal mining operations in virgin areas for the purpose of captive consumption for power generation and other end uses to be notified, as well as to set up coal washeries.

A Bill to amend the Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Act, 1973 in order to implement the above decision of the Government is introduced in Parliament.

*130. [*Transferred to the 28th July, 1992*].

SAARC Trade Pact

*131. DR. SANJAYA SINH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item which appeared in the 'Times of India', dated June 26, 1992, captioned "Move for SAARC Trade Pact runs into trouble" to the effect that exercise to liberalise trade between members of the SAARC has run into a rough patch;

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard; and

(c) what is the reaction of Government in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) At the Committee on Economic Cooperation (CEC) held in Colombo during June 22-23, there were some initial differences on the validity of a prior recommendation by an Inter Governmental Group (IGG) to set up a SAARC Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA) in three years. These were ironed out with an understanding to regard the three year period as indicative in nature, aimed at expediting the process of economic cooperation among the member States. Both the IGG and CEC reports were approved by the SAARC Council of Ministers at their meeting in Colombo on 8-9 July, 1992. The IGG will hold its next meeting early to draft an agreement on a Preferencial Trade Arrangements in the SAARC Region.

Postponement of talks for Asiasat Transponder

*132. SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE:
SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that talks with the Hongkong firm, Hutchinson Whampoa, for leasing a transponder on Asiasat I satellite scheduled to be held in May this year, were indefinitely postponed at a short notice;

(b) if so, under what circumstances and whether Government sees Pakistan's hand behind the postponement as reported in the 'Hindustan Times' dated 28th May, 1992; and

(c) what steps are being taken by Government to secure the transponder facility?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (KUMARI GIRIJA VYAS): (a) to (c) The proposed visit of a delegation to Hong Kong in May, 1992 to explore the possibility of obtaining a transponder on

Asiasat did not materialise since M/s. Asia Satellite Telecommunications Co. Ltd. sought a Rescheduling of the visit. M/s Asia Satellite Telecommunications Co. Ltd. have now requested for fresh dates for the visit.

Closing of Small Scale Units

*133. SHRI MENTAY PADMANABHAM: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that a large number of small scale units have closed down since the introduction of the New Industrial Policy;

(b) if so, the number of units closed down during the last one year;

(c) whether Government have identified the reasons for the large number of such closures; and

(d) what steps Government proposed to take to revive them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY (DEPARTMENT OF SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIES AND AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES, AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. J. KURIEN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) A number of factors both internal and external, often operating in conjunction have been responsible for industrial sickness/closure in the small scale sector. Some of the identified major reasons of sickness/closure in the small scale sector are: paucity of adequate raw materials and working capital, delayed realisation of receivables, particularly from large units, marketing problems, management deficiencies, technilogical obsolescence, frequent power cuts/trippings, labour problems, dispute among owners, natural calamities or accident, etc.

(d) Steps taken by Government to revive potentially viable sick small scale units include:

(i) Issuance of detailed guidelines by RBI to all scheduled commercial banks in regard to rehabilitation of sick units in small scale sector;

(ii) Setting up of State Level Inter-Institutional Committees (SLIICs) in all States under the Chairmanship of Secretary, Industries Department for working out a rehabilitation package for revival of viable sick small scale units;

A committee to review the arrangements for meeting the working capital and term loan requirements of small scale industries and for the rehabilitation of sick small scale industries and to examine any other issues relating to small scale industries have been appointed vide RBI memorandum date 9-12-1991.

Persons registered in A. P. Employment Exchanges

*134. DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) how many persons are on the live registers of employment exchanges in A.P., their break up as per their qualifications;

(b) since how long they are registered and what is the likely date of maturity of their placement and the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR): (SHRI P. A. SANGMA): (a) and (b) There were 32.6 lakhs job-seekers on the live register of employment exchanges in Andhra Pradesh as on 30th April,1992. The latest available date of registered job-seekers in Andhra Pradesh by